



INAHTA Briefs

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Issue:	What standardized outcomes measurement instruments are most suitable for routine outcome data collecting and reporting for VHA mental health services related to depression?
Title:	Outcome Measurement in Major Depression
Agency:	VA Technology Assessment Program (11 T), Office of Patient Care Services, Room D4-142, 150 S. Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02130; Tel: 857-364-4469 Fax: 857-364-6587
Reference:	VA Technology Assessment Program Short Report, Number 8, September, 2004. www.va.gov/vatap
Aim:	To identify outcomes measurement instruments to use to track the progress and treatment of patients with major depression.
Conclusions and results:	This review identified fifteen instruments (ten depression-specific, five generic) that were either developed or used for outcomes measurement in major depression. These included the Depression Outcomes Module (DOM), Zung Self Rating Depression Scale (Zung SDS), Short Form-36 item (SF-36), Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression (HAM-D), the Global Assessment of Function (GAF), Sheehan Disability Scale (SDS), and the Quality of Well Being self-assessment (QWB-SA). The DOM, QWB SA and SF-36 meet all criteria for assessment. The Zung SDS and the HAM-D meet all criteria except assessment of functioning. All but the DOM assess symptom severity only. The QWB SA and SF-36 may not be valid in a severely ill patient population. The SDS measures functional disability and meets half of the criteria. Other instruments fully or closely meeting the criteria for VHA use were the Quality of Life in Depression Scale and the PHQ-9. These instruments are being evaluated to determine the most suitable instrument to use for the progress and treatment of patients with major depression.
Recommendations:	VA managers have a variety of constructs and instruments from which to choose those most suitable to their outcome measurement needs and preferences for depression care. There is a need for consensus on preferred approaches for use in VA.
Methods:	A qualitative systematic review of the literature was undertaken. Comprehensive searches of the psychological and biomedical databases, MEDLINE®, HEALTHStar®, PSYCInfo®, Current Contents®, EMBASE®, the Cochrane Library®, and the extensive local monograph collections of McLean Psychiatric Hospital, and the Countway Library of Medicine from 1976 to 2001 were carried out. Use of a comprehensive array of bibliographic search strategy terms and free text words retrieved over 1400 references, including end references, along with several highly useful books on mental health instruments and outcome evaluation. Articles that described or analyzed instruments used in treating and monitoring patients with major depression were included. A list of instrument selection criteria that are relevant to VA mental health services was applied.
Further research/reviews required:	Additional research is needed to determine which outcomes measurement instrument(s) is best suited for major depression.

Written by:

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